

The background of the slide is a detailed painting of the Tower of Babel by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The tower is a massive, spiraling structure with numerous levels, each featuring arched windows and intricate architectural details. It is set against a dramatic sky with dark, swirling clouds. The surrounding landscape is a mix of fields, a river, and a small town in the distance.

Study 7:

Old Testament Corroboration

Evidence for the Old Testament
from History and Archaeology

Image Source:

• "The Tower of Babel" by Pieter Bruegel (http://www.spamula.net/blog/archives/000320.html)

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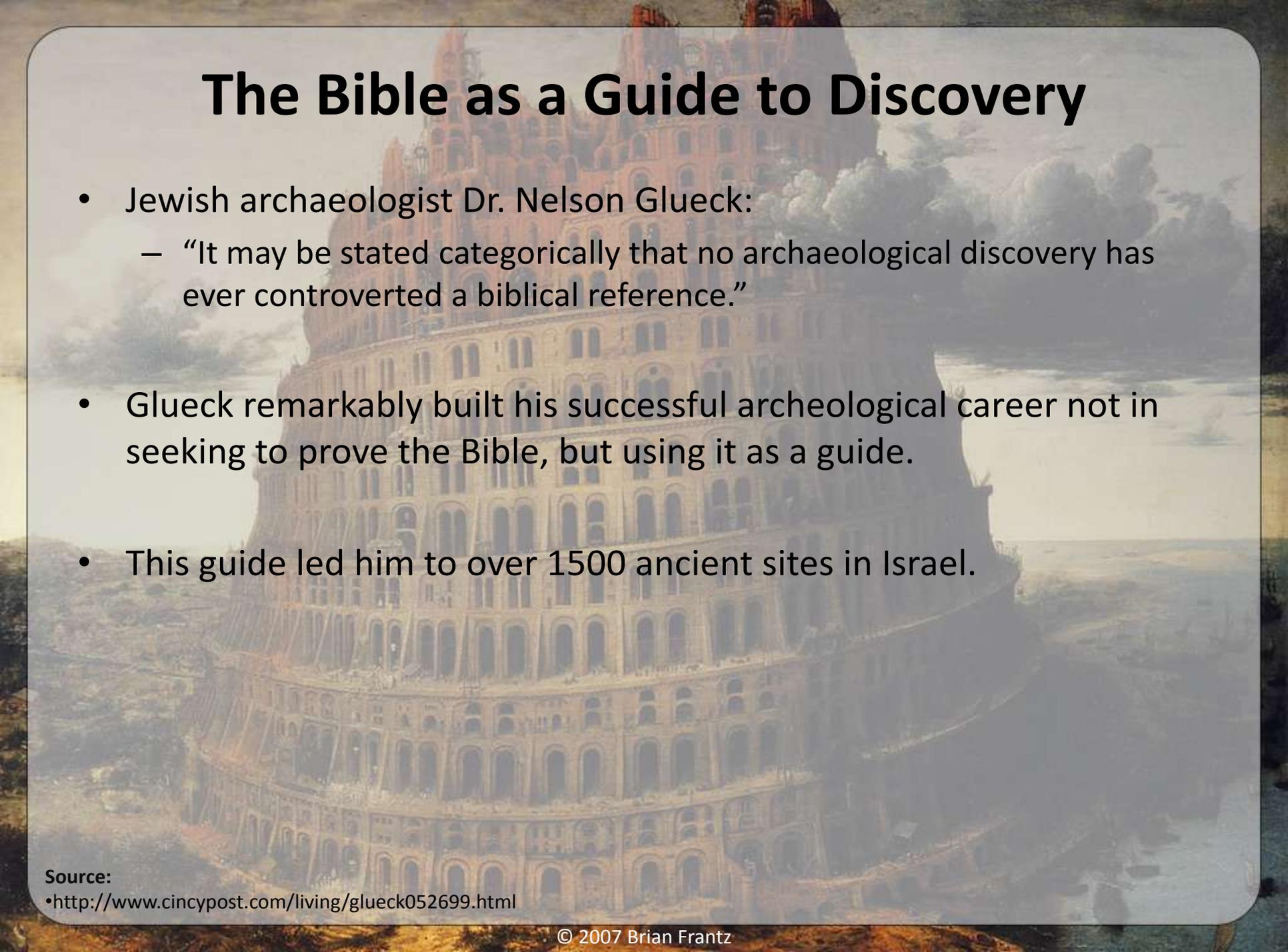
What's It Good For?

- Archaeological and historical evidence that coincide with the Bible do not prove the Bible to be entirely credible.
- However, just as criminal investigators test a suspect's claims against actual evidence, we can do the same to build a case for the Bible.
- If the Bible were clearly wrong about history and archaeology, how could we trust its account of Christ?
- On the other hand, if the Bible is right about history and geography, that makes it more reasonable to accept its portrayal of Christ.

Source:

• *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel

The Bible as a Guide to Discovery

The background of the slide is a painting of the Tower of Babel, a massive, spiraling stone structure with many levels of arches and windows, reaching towards a cloudy sky. The tower is built on a hillside overlooking a valley.

- Jewish archaeologist Dr. Nelson Glueck:
 - “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”
- Glueck remarkably built his successful archeological career not in seeking to prove the Bible, but using it as a guide.
- This guide led him to over 1500 ancient sites in Israel.

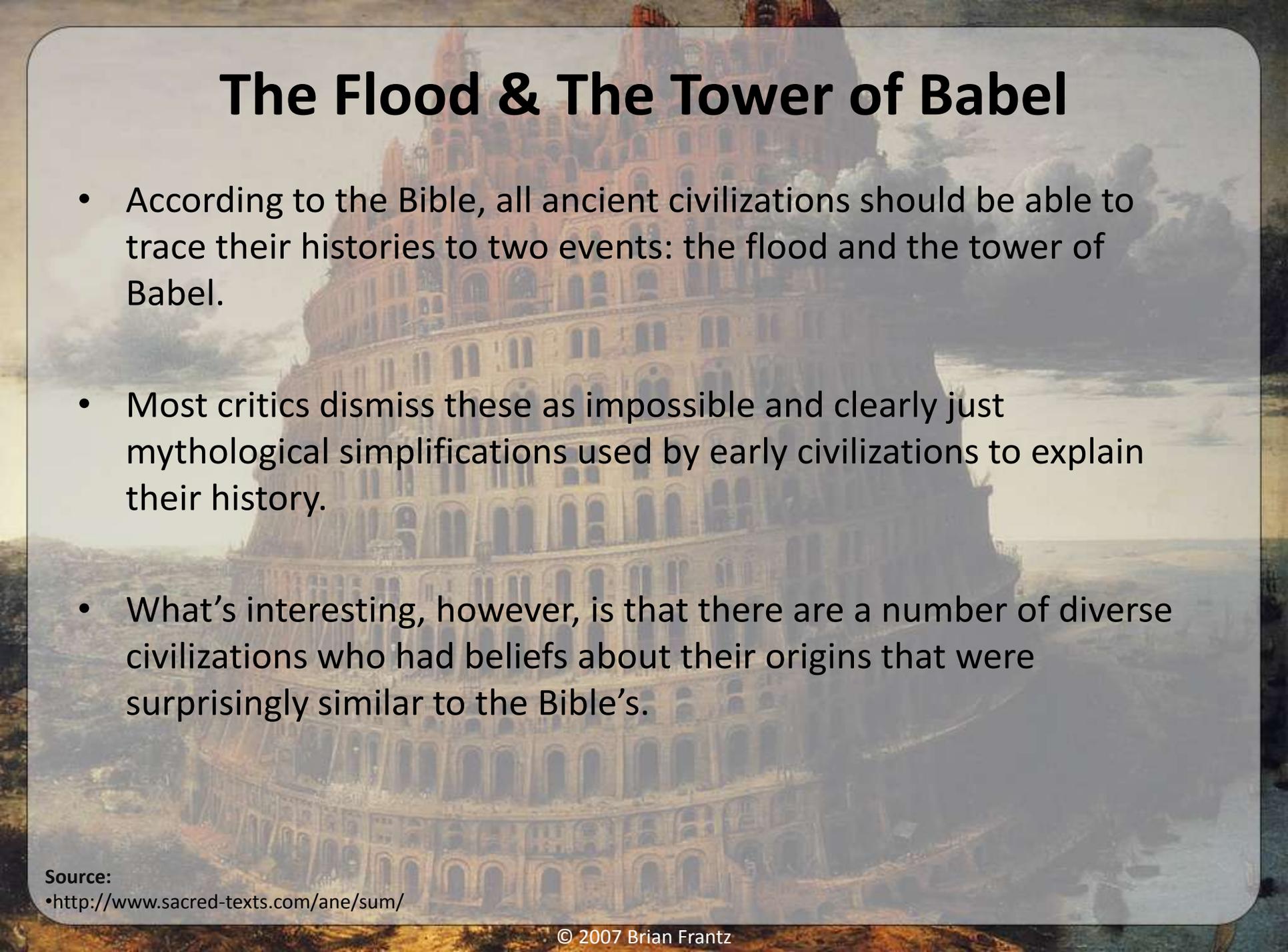
Source:

•<http://www.cincypost.com/living/glueck052699.html>

A Preliminary Note on Miracles

- Part of this study will explore possible natural explanations for phenomena the Bible says were acts of God.
- Suggesting that God used natural forces to achieve something special doesn't mean it wasn't a miracle.
- The timing, outcome and sheer improbability of these events are clear indicators that God was directly involved. Not to mention the fact that human beings were told ahead of time of their coming.

The Flood & The Tower of Babel



- According to the Bible, all ancient civilizations should be able to trace their histories to two events: the flood and the tower of Babel.
- Most critics dismiss these as impossible and clearly just mythological simplifications used by early civilizations to explain their history.
- What's interesting, however, is that there are a number of diverse civilizations who had beliefs about their origins that were surprisingly similar to the Bible's.

Source:

•<http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/sum/>

Babylonian “Epic of Gilgamesh”

- Poem begins with an account of creation and the founding of 5 antediluvian cities.
- It then describes a flood the gods decreed to wipe out mankind. Some of the gods apparently regretted this decision and let Ziusudra, a pious, god-fearing and humble king, know about the plan.
- Portions of the passage describing the flood tell of a flood that raged over the surface of the earth for 7 days and nights, and at the end of which Ziusudra killed an ox and worshiped the gods.

Source:

•<http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/sum/>

Greek Legend

- Jupiter addresses assembly of gods and bemoans the condition of things on earth. He announces his intention to destroy the earth and provide a new race that would be more devout.
- His first idea was to burn the earth with a thunderbolt, but thought better of it after considering that the flames might reach heaven. So he resolved instead to drown it.
- The legend describes the flood as immense: “now all was sea, sea without shore” and that the only survivors were those on the highest hilltops and in boats.

Source:

•http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_bullfinch_2.htm

More Flood Accounts

- According to Christian apologist Josh McDowell, “similar flood accounts are found all over the world [...] – the Greeks, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Mexicans, the Algonquins and the Hawaiians.”
- The fact that so many civilizations mention a cataclysmic flood in their mythologies makes a strong argument that these floods are likely the same one and that such a thing actually did happen.
- But which account is the right one? McDowell explains:
 - “The other versions contain elaborations indicating corruption. Only in Genesis is the year of the flood given, [and] the length of the rainfall in the pagan accounts (seven days) is not enough time for the devastation they describe. [...] The Babylonian idea that all of the flood waters subsided in one day is equally absurd.”

Source:

• *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

Greek Parallel to Genesis 11

Greek Historian Abydenus gives the Greek version:

“But there are some who say that the men who first arose out of the earth, being puffed up by their strength and great stature, and proudly thinking that they were better than the gods, raised a huge tower, where Babylon now stands: and when they were already nearer to heaven, the winds came to the help of the gods, and overthrew their structure upon them, the ruins of which were called Babylon. And being up to that time of one tongue, they received from the gods a confused language; and afterwards war arose between Cronos and Titan.”

Source:

•http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_pe_09_book9.htm

Alternate Jewish Version of Genesis 11

Jewish historian Flavius Josephus quotes “the Sibyl” in his *Antiquities of the Jews*:

“When all men were of one language, some of them built a high tower, as if they would thereby ascend up to heaven, but the gods sent storms of wind and overthrew the tower, and gave every one his peculiar language; and for this reason it was that the city was called Babylon.”

Source:

•http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/fathers/eusebius_pe_09_book9.htm

Aztec/Mexican Parallel to Genesis 11

Mexican historian Fernando de Alba Ixtlilxochitl wrote in his *Obras Historicas*:

“And as men were thereafter multiplying they constructed a very high and strong *Zacualli*, which means “a very high tower” in order to protect themselves when again the second world should be destroyed [most likely a reference to the flood mentioned in other indigenous South American mythologies]. At the crucial moment their languages were changed, and as they did not understand one another, they went into different parts of the world.”

Source:

•<http://www.varchive.org/itb/confus.htm>

The Philologists' Take

Wheaton college professor of archaeology Joseph Free reports in *Archaeology and Bible History* that:

“[Italian professor] Alfredo Trombetti says he can trace and prove the common origin of *all* languages. [German philologist] Max Mueller also attests to the common origin. And [Danish linguist and Copenhagen English professor] Otto Jespersen goes so far as to say that language was directly given to the first men by God.”

Exodus: Relevance of the Date

- Scholars disagree about when the exodus occurred by about 200 years.
- Some favor the earlier of the two dates because it would bring the event within 100 years of the eruption of Santorini, which could explain the polluted water, hail and ash, and the invasion of creatures and dead livestock.
- However, the prevailing belief among scholars is that the Exodus took place during the 13th century, based upon archaeological evidence found in Egypt. This tends to discount the Santorini explanation.

Source:

•http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33168

Plagues of Egypt: A Possible Play-By-Play

- Although largely hypothetical, Cambridge physicist Colin Humphreys has proposed a rather plausible explanation for how the plagues may have happened.
- Humphreys' scientific approach to this event gives him a fresh perspective to this long-debated subject.
- The detailed account may be found in Chapters 9 and 10 of *The Miracles of Exodus*.

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Plagues 1-4

- Water turned to blood (September): Red soil plus epidemic of harmful red algal blooms during flood season color estuaries near the Nile delta red and kill fish.
- Frogs (Sept-Oct): Polluted water forces huge frog population ashore where they died of starvation and dehydration.
- Flies and gnats (Oct-Nov): Insects, including the regional biting midge and stable fly, breed rapidly due to population collapse of frogs.
- Disease and death of livestock (Nov-Dec): Bluetongue virus and African horse sickness are carried by huge biting midge population and are both known to kill the very animals mentioned in the Bible (without harming humans and other Egyptian animals such as cats and pigs).

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Plagues 5-8

- Boils (Dec-Jan): Stable fly is known to bite people and animals. Because of their great numbers, infections from the bites would have likely been widespread.
- Hail (February-March): An exceptionally severe hailstorm hits. Rare, but not unheard-of for the region.
- Locusts (February-March): Desert locusts, attracted by the damp sand from the hailstorm, settle and lay eggs in the area.
- Darkness (March): Hot and violent Egyptian wind known as the *khamzin* produces dark and dense dust storm that blocks out the sun.

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Death of Firstborn

- Seeing the approaching sandstorm, the Egyptians would have sealed up their food stores. But these stores would have been damp from the hail and also contaminated by locust feces.
- Lacking ventilation to dry it out, mycotoxins would have likely poisoned the grain – a poison that leads to rapid internal bleeding and death.
- In Egyptian culture, first-born sons were the heirs and would have likely been fed first. Since the tops of the stored grain would have been most damp, the first people to eat would have had the most exposure to the poison.
- First-born animals, used for sacrifices, would also have received preferential treatment at feeding-time, and have been next after first-born people to be fed.

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Other Comments

- As for the Israelites' safety from the plagues, they lived outside the city – probably further South and thus not as close to the delta estuaries.
- Additionally, the Israelites had special instructions for how to eat during the time that the Egyptians were poisoned, including fully-cooked lambs they had kept apart from others for weeks.
- If it happened this way, the timing of these events, along with Moses' predictions and the divine instructions that kept the Israelites safe, make it clear that such a series of events were far more than coincidence.

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Crossing of the Red Sea

- Location has been topic of much debate.
 - Many scholars suggest that “red sea” is a mistranslation of the Hebrew “yam suph” which means “sea of reeds,” and that the Israelites crossed a marsh.
 - Many other scholars reject this based on other Biblical uses of the phrase which are obviously in reference to the Red Sea.
- Explanations ranging from tsunamis to tides have been suggested for how the red sea could have receded and then closed, but these ignore the Biblical description of Eastern winds holding the winds back and drying the sea bed.

Crossing of the Red Sea: Humphreys' Take

- He believes the Gulf of Aqaba is the most likely location, which agrees with archaeologist Ron Wyatt who found a chariot wheel there.
- His explanation is based on the natural phenomenon called “wind setdown” in which wind can force water back hundreds of yards along a sloping shoreline.
 - For this to succeed, it must blow for hours, which coincides with Exodus 14:21.
 - Based on his knowledge of physics, he believes that had this wind come to an abrupt stop, a wall of water would have rushed back over the land with a force sufficient to knock over a horse and rider.
- Unfortunately, political forces in the region have prevented a thorough archaeological exploration of the Gulf of Aqaba, meaning there may be further evidence waiting to be uncovered.

Source:

• *The Miracles of Exodus* by Colin Humphreys

Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah

- Bryant Wood of Associates for Biblical Research explains that these cities:
 - Have been located southeast of the Dead sea.
 - Were obviously destroyed by an intense fire that started *on the roofs of all the buildings*.
- Bitumen, an asphalt-like mixture often containing sulfur, is plentiful in the area.
 - Before the ruins had been discovered, geologist Frederick Clapp theorized that an earthquake could have spewed this material into the air as described in the Bible.
 - After this, it was found that a fault line does exist beneath the sites and that there is evidence of an earthquake having occurred.

Source:

•<http://www.christiananswers.net>

Ebla Excavations

- McDowell lists many Biblically relevant findings that resulted from the discovery of thousands of tablets at Ebla, an ancient city located in Northern Syria.
- Only a fraction have been translated so far, but there is already a significant list of interesting references:
 - Place-names mentioned in the Bible.
 - Hebrew names such as Israel, Ishmael, etc.
 - Tributes on the scale of those the Bible claims Solomon received.
 - Early records of religious practices critics have claimed did not appear until much later than the Bible claims.
 - Early mention of Hebrew words critics have claimed did not appear until much later than they were supposedly written in the Bible.

Source:

• *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell